

The Angel's Song

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[0 : 0 0] Good morning to everyone and a Christ-filled Christmas to all.! Our scripture reading this morning is taken from Luke chapter 2 verses 1 through 20.

! Luke 2, 1 through 20. In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

[1 : 1 7] And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them. And the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear.

And the angel said to them, Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

And this will be a sign for you. You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased.

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.

And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told to them concerning this child.

[2 : 3 3] And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen as it had been told them.

This is the word of the Lord. Thank you very much, David.

For the past two weeks, we have been in a sermon series titled The Songs of Christmas. And so far, we have considered two of the songs of Christmas.

We considered the song of Mary. We considered the song of Zechariah. And this morning, we are concluding with the song of the angels.

And there is another song. It's the song of Simeon, which we are not going to be covering this time. And hopefully, we will do so at another time.

[3 : 44] I think you would agree with me that whenever we come to familiar passages of Scripture, we all run the risk of not being as attentive.

We all run the risk of coming to it with a sense of familiarity. And therefore, we tend not to get much from it as much as we could if we came with fresh eyes.

But this song that we are considering this morning, this song of the angels, the angels sang about something that was so glorious.

They sang about something that was so glorious that it was the only birth that we have a record in Scripture about angels singing about.

And we had the privilege this morning of joining in and singing songs, but the angels sang this song 2,000 years ago when the Savior was born.

[4 : 53] Friends, the truth is that if we really understand what took place when the Son of God came down and took on human flesh, we would sing. Indeed, we would still be singing.

We will sing our own song of praise. And so my prayer for us this morning is that we come to this passage with fresh eyes and a humble heart that God will speak to us.

Though a familiar passage, He will speak to us in unfamiliar ways. So let me pray for us before we get started. Father, we bow our hearts before you this morning.

And we ask, O Lord, that you would grant us fresh eyes and humble hearts, that we might behold something new out of an old story.

And God, I pray that more than just learning something new, that our hearts will be affected in new ways. I pray that we would marvel at the grace of God that has come to us in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[6 : 07] I pray that we will marvel afresh at the gospel, the good news that sinful men and women can be reconciled to a holy God.

And so God, would you arrest all of our attention this morning? And would you speak to all of our hearts through the preaching of your word?

And we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, the Song of the Angels is the shortest of all of the songs of Christmas, and I think it follows that this should be the shortest sermon in the series.

I was thinking to ask some people to pray with me that it would be the shortest, but I was afraid that a number of you would pray with me that it would be the shortest. But it is the shortest.

And maybe it's short just to get us to focus on the central message of it, that we don't lose ourselves in the many words that we might find.

[7 : 21] And so in this account that we just read, we see Luke telling us about an angel appearing when Jesus was born.

And this angel spoke to shepherds and told shepherds, announce the birth of Christ. And they were fearful, and the angel assured them there was no reason to be afraid because he had brought good news of great joy for all the people.

And he announced that in the city of David, a Savior had been born. Not a baby, although a baby was born, but he announced that this was a Savior who was born, and this Savior was the Messiah, that he was Christ the Lord.

And then suddenly that angel was joined, Luke tells us, by a multitude of other angels, and they were praising God, saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased.

And so the angel's song gives glory to God and proclaims peace on earth. Those are the two themes of the song of the angels.

- [8 : 47] They do those two things. Give glory to God, and they proclaim peace on earth. The angel's song is a simple song, but the angel's song is a profound song.
- And when we consider the angel's song, it's not a past tense song. It's a present tense song. It is a song that was sung, and it is a song that is to continue to be sung.
- It is a song to be sung for generations. It is a song for all seasons, but it's especially a song for this season. And so in our remaining time, I want to call us this day and every day to echo the angel's song of the Savior's birth by doing what they did.
- Give glory to God and proclaim peace on earth. And so when we understand the angel's song, we realize that it is not just a song to be enjoyed, but it is a song to be obeyed.
- So first, the angel's song calls us to give glory to God. The angels recognize that the birth of Christ called for giving God the highest glory possible.
- [10 : 22] And why is that? Why was this a moment that God deserved the highest glory possible? The reason is that in the birth of Christ, God fulfilled his long-given promise of sending a Savior.
- This promise was given way back in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve had sinned. When they stood broken by their sin and drowning in shame and overcome by despair, and God in that moment gave them a promise that he was going to send one who would be the seed of the woman who would crush the head of the serpent.
- And over many thousands of years, God affirmed and reaffirmed that promise again and again and again. And he affirmed that a Savior would be born from the house of David.
- And over those thousands of years, God's faithful people waited, and they watched, and they looked for a Savior who would come to crush the serpent's head and to deliver the otherwise hopeless people of God.
- And brothers and sisters, when we really understand what the Father did in sending the Son to be the Savior of sinners, to come to this earth, to take on human flesh, and to live a perfect life that none of us could live, and to die as a substitute for sinners, when we understand the import of that, we give glory to God.
- [12 : 07] Because salvation has come to the undeserving. And when we think about what we did deserve, what we did deserve from a holy God that he didn't give us, that's two reasons for rejoicing.
- Instead of sending his Son, God could have poured out his wrath. He could have poured out his wrath on Adam and all of his fallen race, and He would have been just and justified in doing so.
- But instead, He sent us His Son as a Savior to rescue us from our sin. And again, the more we grasp this, the more likely we are to join with the angels and sing glory to God in the highest.
- That's what the shepherds did. If you look at verse 20, it says, the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all that they had seen, they had heard and seen as it had been told to them.
- And brothers and sisters, this morning, if you belong to Christ and this is not amazing to you, ask God, God, open my eyes, cause me to be amazed at that which caused a host of angels to come and sing glory to God in the highest.
- [13 : 49] Ask God to help us to be amazed as we celebrate the Savior's birth today and indeed, every time we think about it, and to be amazed that God would send His Son to this earth.
- That God the Son would not grab onto His position in heaven, but that He would knowingly come to this earth. Not be surprised by what awaited Him, but that He would knowingly, perfectly know what awaited Him and He would come to this earth to redeem sinners like you and me.

And it wasn't just the brokenness of this earth and the fallenness of this earth and all that God the Son had to endure, but ultimately the cross that He would bear, a cross that was so excruciating that Jesus found Himself in the Garden of Gethsemane, God the Son, saying, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.

He came knowing all of that. And what happened to Jesus in the Garden on the cross, we deserved. And God in mercy withheld that from us.

Brothers and sisters, when we understand that, we want to sing, we should want to sing and we should give glory to God. In addition to calling us to give glory to God, the angel's song calls us to proclaim peace on earth.

[15 : 33] And why did they proclaim peace on earth? It's an unusual announcement. A lot of people would have thought things were fine. They would think peace.

That's not what we need. But here again, it goes way back to the Garden. It goes back to the fall of Adam and Eve.

It goes back to the fact that when Adam and Eve fell, there was no longer peace between God and man. Adam and Eve rebelled against God. They turned their own way.

And guess what? They were not alone. All of Adam's race joined in with that and we have all lived in rebellion to God. Because of the fall, the human race lost peace with God.

But not only did we lose peace with God, we lost peace with one another. Read Genesis 1-4 and you'll see it. You will very clearly see what happened.

[16 : 36] We lost the peace that we enjoyed with a holy God. And so at the Savior's birth, the angels come and they announce this peace, this message from heaven to earth, peace to fallen men and women whose relationship with God is broken and whose relationship with one another is also broken.

And it's that one word message, peace. And it comes through one person, Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the one who brought God's peace on earth.

And what is this peace that he brings? Is it a peace where there's the absence of noise and the removal of conflict? Is that the peace that Jesus in his birth offered and that the angels announced in their song?

That's not the peace that he offers. The best way to understand the peace that Jesus brought and that the angels sang about is to imagine a war.

Imagine a war where there was an overpowering army that just defeated the other army and that country and now they have a choice.

[18 : 08] They have a choice to settle with terms of peace or be annihilated. And the greater army would come in and they would bring the terms of peace and they say, well, if you want peace, you must settle on these terms.

That's the kind of peace that God brings us. God brings us the terms that allows there to be reconciliation between him and us but it's his terms of peace.

The disobedience of Adam plunge the entire race of God race of Adam, sorry, in rebellion against God.

All of us. And so we all need the terms of peace that God offers if there will be reconciliation between him and man.

One of the helpful ways to think about the Bible is to see the Bible subdivided into four parts. And the first part is creation, which is Genesis 1 and 2.

[19 : 16] And then fall, which is Genesis chapter 3. and then promise, which is everything from there up until the birth of Jesus Christ.

Because God made this promise that he was going to defeat Satan and sin. And then after Christ comes, it's fulfillment.

And so from Christ's birth until the book of Revelation to the end, we have this fulfillment. So it is creation, fall, promise, and fulfillment.

And God is fulfilling that promise that he made. And he offers peace to sinners. But he doesn't offer peace just in a way to say, hey, don't worry about it, let's be friends.

No. The peace that he was offering was wrapped up in his son who was not just going to be born but was also going to die.

[20 : 24] And see, oftentimes when we think about Jesus and we think of his birth, we tend to just think about him in his birth. But no, he was born to die.

Jesus came into the world as God's Lamb who would take away the sin of the world. It says this in Matthew 1, 21. It says his name will be Jesus.

And here's why. Because he will save his people from their sins. That's concerning his birth. Even in his birth, his death was contemplated.

And that is the way that peace comes. Peace does not come to us just in the birth of Jesus. Peace comes to us ultimately in the death of Jesus.

And that is the peace that God offers. God offers us peace first and foremost with him. It's not peace and quiet.

[21 : 30] It's not the absence of conflict. It's not having a wonderful life where you're not flustered in any way. No. It is saying to us, you are not at peace with God. You need to be at peace with God.

And the only way to be at peace with God is through his son who has come to live and to die and to be raised again for sinners. And those are the terms of peace.

And friends, we will not know peace any other way. Having a sentimental idea about Jesus and the peaceful time of this season will never bring us true and lasting peace.

peace. Peace peace. Peace only comes to those who receive God's terms of peace and God's terms of peace comes in the person of his son who came as a child and who was destined to go to a cross and to be a substitute for sin and sinners because he had no sin.

He was taking the place of sinners like you and me. And so friends, we have this choice to accept his terms of peace or to be destroyed.

[22 : 45] and he lovingly offers us his terms of peace. One of the differences between the illustration I gave is not a very good illustration because we can never fully use human illustrations to illustrate God.

It's very interesting to read about world wars and to see the terms of peace that were imposed on certain nations and what those nations lost. So humanly speaking when we make peace generally the peace is at our expense but not so with God.

He brought his terms of peace but at his expense. God himself became the sacrifice to bring peace between him and those who rebelled against him.

but those are his terms of peace and all who will truly know peace will embrace those terms.

Listen to the words of Isaiah in Isaiah chapter 9 verses 6 and 7. This is one of the promises that God made after creation after the fall is when the promises that he made.

[24 : 17] For unto us a child is born Isaiah 9 6 to 7 For unto us a child is born to us a son is given and the government shall be on his shoulder and he shall be called Wonderful Counselor Mighty God Everlasting Father Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and peace and of peace there will be no end. On the throne of David and over his kingdom to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore the zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.

God brings his peace and he accomplishes his peace by his own strength. The Prince of Peace was born almost 2,000 years ago in a stable in Bethlehem.

But look again at verse 14 the second part of the angel's song. Notice that the peace that the angels sang about was not an unconditional peace and a universal peace to all people everywhere.

I want you to see that. It's not unconditional and it's not universal. The peace only comes among those with whom God is pleased.

[25 : 59] pleased. It's not peace to all men. It's not peace to all people. It is peace to those with whom God is pleased.

And I'm pretty sure this comes as a surprise to some of us. God is not pleased with everyone. and so his peace is not with everyone.

But if we understand the God of the Bible this would not surprise us because he's a holy God. He's a God who hates sin.

He's a God who cannot countenance sin. He's the God who has in the person of his son defeated sin.

But exactly with whom is God pleased? Is God pleased with us because we're special? We're special. We're special. We're special. Is God pleased with us because we're not as bad as other people?

[27 : 23] We've not committed any really, really big sins? And generally speaking, we're okay? And the good in our lives outweighs the bad in our lives?

No, God is pleased with those who have come to see their sinful condition. He is pleased with those who have seen their sinful brokenness and recognize their need for a savior and they have received the forgiveness that God offers through his son.

They've bowed their hearts and their lives to his lordship. They're the ones who are peace with God. They're the ones who have been reconciled with God.

They're the ones with whom God is pleased. And why is he pleased with them? He's pleased with them because he's pleased with his son and they are in his son.

Both at his baptism and at his transfiguration, God the father spoke and said, this is my son, my beloved son. Listen to him.

[28 : 35] He is the one with whom I am pleased. Friends, God is only pleased with us when we find ourselves in his son. God is when we find ourselves clinging to his son as our only hope, as our only savior, and recognizing how wretched we are away from him and how needy we are for the peace that comes through him.

only those with whom God is pleased can know this true peace. They're the only ones.

And friends, we don't want to be at war with the United States. None of us would want the United States to be at enmity with us or any other world power for that matter.

Imagine being at odds with the God of the universe. The one who just speaks and things happen. The one who holds our very breath.

in his hands. The only way to have peace with him is through his son who was born in Bethlehem in a manger.

[30 : 04] And the angels announced that they said, this is the savior. This is the one who was born savior of the world. Not in the sense of the world without exception, but it's a world without distinction.

All kinds of people, whoever they may be, whatever they may have done, he is the savior of them all. And he is the only one through whom this peace that God offers is available.

And so my question to you this morning is, have you trusted in Jesus, have you turned from your life of sin? Have you found your place at the foot of the cross and received forgiveness for your sins that only God can give?

And if you have, you know God's peace. peace. And it doesn't mean that we do this perfectly. The reality of the Christian life is we come to him to be forgiven and as long as we are in relationship with him, we will need forgiveness.

forgiveness. And it matters not what we go through in this life. Maybe things are falling around you, maybe you are in despair, maybe you are afraid about what tomorrow holds, but between you and God there is peace.

[31 : 37] It is well with your soul. Your most important need has been taken care of. But if you're here this morning or you're watching online and you have not trusted in Jesus, you have not repented of your sins, I urge you, don't be lost in the nostalgia of this time.

Don't be lost in the wonderful choruses that we can sing that can be so soothing to the soul emotionally. If you have not come to embrace God's terms of peace in his son, the Lord Jesus Christ, know that your soul is in great peril.

And know that the next moment of drawing breath is not promised to any of us. And know that if you do not turn from sin and trust in Jesus, you will be eternally lost.

You will be eternally separated from him in eternal punishment if you do not repent and trust in Jesus Christ as your only savior before a holy God.

And please know this morning I take no pleasure in saying this. It breaks my heart to say this, but it is my solemn duty to say this.

[33 : 17] I don't want to see any of us perish. On the night that Jesus was born, the angels announced that it was a day of good news, of great joy for all the people.

All the people. It doesn't matter who you are. It doesn't matter what you've done. You can find forgiveness for your sins. You can be reconciled to God if you repent and believe.

One of the things that struck me as I worked through these three songs of the angels, and even these three songs, including the angels song, and including Simeon's song, which we won't get to, it is interesting how they speak in such a way that it is an accomplished fact, the salvation that God brings.

You read what Zechariah sang about, what Mary sang about, what the angels sang about, what Simeon sings about. When Mary sang, Jesus was not even born yet.

When Zechariah sang, he wasn't born yet. He sang at John's birth. The angels sang when he was a little baby, and then Simeon sings when he's being dedicated about eight days later.

[34 : 47] But they all sing as this salvation that God has brought as an accomplished fact. And why are they able to do that?

They're able to do that because whatever God promises, he fulfills. And as surely as Jesus died, as surely as he was born, sorry, he would die in fulfillment of the promise that God had made, that the Savior would come and the Savior would atone for sins.

And that's why even before he went to the cross, the language in these songs is a finished language. it reminds us that salvation is of the Lord from start to finish.

God was not sending his son and hoping and praying that maybe some people would believe in him. No, God before the foundation of the world ensured that his son's sacrifice would not be for naught.

And he gave particular ones to his son that they would come and they would believe and they would trust in him. It is an accomplished fact that salvation is of the Lord.

[36 : 03] They sang in that way because it was as good as done. And we would be remiss this morning as we think about the Savior's first coming to not be aware that he's coming again.

And the same God who promised that he was going to send his son has promised that he will send him again. And thousands of years elapsed between that promise that he gave in the garden when he said he was going to send the seed of the woman who would crush the head of the serpent.

Thousands of years elapsed. And some people think that because thousands of years have elapsed since Jesus said he would come again that he is not coming again. No. God is a patient God.

And the same way that Christ was born in the fullness of time he will come again in the fullness of time. And he will come for those who are his people. And so I urge us this morning if you do not know Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord turn from your sin and come to Christ.

What you will find is a Savior who is full of mercy and who is quick to pardon all of our sins. Whatever they are how great they are.

[37 : 22] Let's pray. Heavenly Father we are so grateful this morning that we can join in with the angels and we can sing of the Savior's coming.

We can sing of the peace that is available to men, women, boys and girls who trust in the Savior. we ask oh Lord that you would speak to hearts in particular those who do not know Christ.

Would you convict of sin? Would you convict of righteousness and judgment to come? God have your way this morning we pray in Jesus name.

Amen. Amen. It's time for closing song.